United Nations E/CN.4/2002/82–E/CN.6/2002/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 December 2001

Original: English

Commission on Human Rights
Fifty-eighth session
18 March-26 April 2002
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*
Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-sixth session
4-15 March 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Joint work plan of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint work plan for the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for 2002, as well as an assessment of the implementation of the work plan for 2001. It is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-sixth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/50.

* E/CN.4/2002/1.
** E/CN.6/2002/1.

01-72306 (E) 200102

I. Introduction

1. Based on Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint work plan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (see E/CN.4/2001/70-E/CN.6/2001/3). In resolution 2001/50 of 24 April 2001, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the cooperation and coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights and the report of the Secretary-General on the joint work plan, encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure its implementation, to continue to elaborate the plan, reflecting all aspects of work under way and the lessons learned and to identify obstacles/impediments and areas for further collaboration and requested that the report be made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-sixth session. The present report has been prepared in accordance with that request.

II. Assessment of the implementation of the current work plan

2. During the implementation of the current joint work plan (E/CN.4/2001/70-E/CN.6/2001/3), the exchange of information between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued. In the course of the year, the Special Adviser met a number of times with the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner to discuss matters of mutual interest, including the implications of the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 22 December 2000. The Division continued to suggest possible trainers on women's rights for the Office's training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments, and also continued to work closely with the Support Services Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner on reporting and other matters relating to human rights treaty bodies. The Division and the High Commissioner's Office continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human rights treaty bodies and to circulate these documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. The Office of the High Commissioner provided information for, and commented on, the reports provided by the Division to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee. The Office of the High Commissioner facilitated the attendance of the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on adequate housing at the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in January 2002.

3. The Division for the Advancement of Women participated in the meeting on the application of human rights to reproductive and sexual health, which was jointly convened by the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Population Fund, held at Geneva, from 25 to 27 June 2001, as follow-up to the 1996 Glen Cove Roundtable on Human Rights Approaches to Women's Health with a Focus on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights. The Division contributed to, and participated in, the meeting of persons chairing treaty bodies organized by the High Commissioner's Office, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 18 to 22 June 2001. Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in workshops organized by the Office of the High Commissioner on reporting under human rights treaties. Members also participated in other activities sponsored by the Office, including the International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation to Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-discrimination, held at Madrid from 23 to 25 November 2001.

4. On 5 July 2001, a statement was presented on behalf of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at a panel entitled "Advancing the Rights of Women and Children through Treaties: a Multilateral Treaty Framework", sponsored by the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women, and the Office of Legal Affairs. The panel was convened in connection with the treaty signature/ratification event organized by the Office of Legal Affairs, which promoted ratification of treaties relevant

to the advancement of women and was held during the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

5. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights cooperated in efforts aimed at ensuring that a gender perspective would be taken into account during the preparations for and in the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001. As part of those efforts, the Division contributed to a pamphlet produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for the Conference on the gender dimensions of racial discrimination. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner facilitated the attendance of two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the Conference and collaborated in organizing a panel during the Conference, entitled "The impact of multiple forms of discrimination on women". The Special Adviser also participated in a meeting between human rights treaty body members and representatives of national human rights institutions and United Nations agencies on "Elements of a Global Alliance against Racism: Roles and Responsibilities of Human Rights Treaty Bodies, National Human Rights Institutions and other Relevant Institutions", and in a panel discussion organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Office of the High Commissioner, entitled "Discrimination is Everybody's Business — Implementing Equality and Diversity Policies: Private Sector Action", which took place during the Conference.

6. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate closely with regard to the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Amongst other activities, a staff member from the Office of the High Commissioner was seconded to the Division for the Advancement of Women from November 2001 to February 2002 to assist in setting up procedures in connection with the Optional Protocol. Another staff member from the Office of the High Commissioner installed two electronic databases at the Division, one dealing with communications under the Optional Protocol and the other allowing information related to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to be fully integrated into the database covering all six treaty bodies. The installation of these databases enhanced significantly the capacity to update and coordinate the web sites of the Division for the Advancement of Women and of the Office of the High Commissioner (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ and http://www.unhchr.ch/). A member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women attended several meetings of the seventy-seventh session of the Human Rights Committee, during which communications were considered.

7. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. They facilitated a teleconference between the bureaux of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights on 21 June 2001. The Division contributed to reports provided by the Office of the High Commissioner to the Commission on Human Rights with respect to integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system; trafficking in women and girls; women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing; and affirmative action. The Division continued to support and contribute to the work of the extra-conventional human rights mechanisms, in particular the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and on the human rights of migrants.

8. Cooperation between the Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued with respect to the Commission on Human Rights. The chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session, and a message from the Special Adviser was delivered at the same session of the Commission. The chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women also attended the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights. The Division and the Office of the

High Commissioner continued to exchange information on the communications procedures of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner contributed to the reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women on assessing the implications of the reforms of mechanisms in the human rights area (1503 procedure) for communications concerning the status of women. Efforts have continued to ensure that the communications procedures of both Commissions are, to the extent possible, mutually complementary, and that information between staff servicing these procedures is shared effectively.

9. Coordination in respect of the preparation of reports to intergovernmental bodies continued. In particular, the Office of the High Commissioner provided input to the reports provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly on traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls and on violence against women migrant workers. The Division for the Advancement of Women provided information to the Office of the High Commissioner on similar mandates of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and, together, the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to seek to streamline reporting.

III. Joint work plan for 2002

10. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue the targeted approach to joint activities that has been consolidated in the course of the implementation of the 2001 work plan. Major emphasis will continue to be placed on supporting the work of human rights treaty bodies and selected special mechanisms and on cooperation between national machineries for the advancement of women and national human rights institutions. Particular efforts will continue to be made to address constraints encountered in the implementation of new and ongoing activities, as well as activities carried over from the 2001 joint work plan.

11. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women on the work of treaty bodies will continue during 2002. This will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies, as well as the regular circulation of these documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. Efforts will be made to ensure that the electronic database covering all six treaty bodies is kept updated and is fully operational and accessible by both the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner. The web sites of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will be further improved to facilitate better communication. Cooperation will continue in respect of training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will cooperate in the creation of a multi-media training package on international human rights instruments, starting with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol.

12. Cooperation will continue between the Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner with regard to the entry into force of the Optional Protocol. Staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division will continue to maintain close contact and collaborate in the exchange of information with regard to communications and inquiry procedures. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will work to organize regular interaction between members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and members of other human rights treaty bodies dealing with communications and inquiry procedures. Steps will be taken to facilitate the attendance of members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the meetings of the Human Rights Committee during its 2002 spring session, where communications will be considered.

13. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to facilitate interaction between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies with a view to enhancing the integration of a gender perspective into their work, including with regard to general comments. The Division will monitor

progress in the work of treaty bodies in integrating a gender perspective and will provide gender-specific input for their work. The Division will update the study on integrating the gender perspective into the work of the human rights treaty bodies (HRI/MC/1998/6).

14. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to provide targeted input for the work of extra-conventional human rights mechanisms, in particular the work of the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences, the human rights of migrants, sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and adequate housing, as well as that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will work together in the organization of a workshop on the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the thematic mandates.

15. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will support and facilitate cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. This will include participation of chairpersons, as well as of senior staff of the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner at sessions of the Commissions, meetings of the bureaux, exchanges of information on working methods and on actions taken by both Commissions. In addition, there will be a third teleconference between the bureaux of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. Cooperation will continue in connection with the review of the communications procedure of the Commission on Human Rights and the implications for the communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as in the exchange of information concerning communications submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will conduct a review of the integration of gender issues in the reports presented to the Commission on Human Rights by the thematic mechanisms since 1996.

16. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will cooperate in the preparation of reports on similar issues to intergovernmental bodies, such as those relating to trafficking in women and girls and to violence against women. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner will cooperate in the organization of an expert group meeting on trafficking in women and girls.

17. The Office of the High Commissioner will continue to participate actively in selected meetings organized by the Division. The Division will contribute to, and participate in, selected meetings of human rights bodies, and other meetings organized by the Office of the High Commissioner. In particular, the Division will be actively involved in the preparation and execution of the meeting of human rights chairpersons, and the inter-committee meeting currently scheduled to take place in late June 2002.

18. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will cooperate in the convening of a meeting of national human rights institutions, national machineries for the advancement of women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to discuss strategies to address the elimination of sex discrimination.

19. The Division will contribute to the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, such as by seeking to ensure that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women takes into account the recommendations of the Conference during its review of States parties reports. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division will collaborate on a joint publication on the gender dimensions of racial discrimination taking into consideration the outcome and follow-up to the Conference.

20. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including in respect of activities related to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and ongoing work with regard to Afghanistan.

21. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will explore possibilities of cooperation, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), within the context of the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme jointly run by UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.